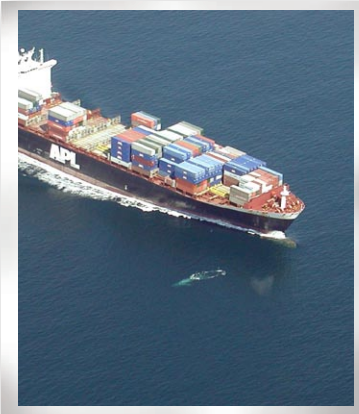


CHANNEL ISLANDS

2007 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



A container ship passes dangerously close to a blue whale. Photo: Julie Helmers

Sanctuary Staff and Partners Respond to Blue Whale Ship Strikes

During a three-week period in September, three blue whales were found dead in Southern California — an unusually high mortality event — raising concern among sanctuary program staff. Two of the whales were struck by ships in the Santa Barbara Channel and a third whale, found floating in Long Beach Harbor, was likely dragged there on the bow of a ship. With recent observations of blue whales feeding on a shallow layer of krill in and around the shipping lanes, the U.S. Coast Guard responded to a sanctuary request to issue a cautionary notice to mariners, encouraging ships in the channel to watch for whales. The notice also recommended ship speeds not exceed 10 knots. Sanctuary staff coordinated flyovers with the Coast Guard to provide real-time locations of blue whales in the shipping lanes.

Researchers Study Effects of Noise on Marine Mammals

Sanctuary staff and researchers from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography are looking at how marine mammals are affected by ship noise. Over the years, scientific research has shown that in some cases, noise from sources like Navy sonar and offshore development can lead to behavioral disturbances, physical injury and even death of some whale species and other marine mammals. Last summer, in an attempt to identify biological and human noise sources in the Santa Barbara Channel, researchers conducted marine mammal surveys, recorded marine mammal vocalizations using a hydrophone array and placed high-frequency acoustic equipment in and around the sanctuary. Following this effort, NOAA's Ocean Acoustics Program funded the expansion of the project, deploying additional sophisticated listening devices that continuously record the natural and human sounds in and around the sanctuary. Initial results show that the waters on the ocean side of the northern Channel Islands are quieter than the waters in the Santa Barbara Channel. The study will also attempt to detect vocal responses by cetaceans to shipping noise.



Kayakers explore the Channel Islands sanctuary. Photo: NOAA

Multi-Year Study Looks at How Boaters Use Sanctuary

The Channel Islands are not a place for casual or inattentive boating. The area is rugged and lacks permanent moorings, and boaters must adeptly use their ground tackle and quickly respond to changing weather patterns. A multi-year study is underway that looks at how boaters value and interact with the sanctuary's marine environment. Key items of the study include where recreational boaters dive, fish and kayak, and their economic contributions. This information is needed to inform management on how people are responding to marine reserves and how to best inform marine resource users.



Two Channel Islands Argonauts present projects at the Oxnard Earth Day Festival. Photo: Danielle Lipski

Advisory Council Endorses Final Report on Open Ocean Aquaculture

In July, the sanctuary's advisory council voted unanimously to endorse a comprehensive report and set of management recommendations contained within its Conservation Working Group's final draft report, titled "Open Ocean Aquaculture in the Santa Barbara Channel:

<http://channelislands.noaa.gov>



NATIONAL MARINE
SANCTUARIES



An emerging challenge for the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary.” The 80-page report highlights the potential environmental implications and regulatory framework for open ocean finfish aquaculture while providing sanctuary management and stakeholders a tool for evaluating future aquaculture project proposals in the Santa Barbara Channel. The report proposes 10 precautionary recommendations related to environmental standards for open ocean aquaculture and sanctuary involvement in policy development and rulemaking processes. The report is available at: http://channelislands.noaa.gov/sac/report_doc.html.

Sanctuary maps available at sanctuaries.noaa.gov

New Group of Argonauts Selected

Students from Santa Barbara, Carpinteria, Ventura and Oxnard were selected for the 2006-07 school year to participate as Channel Islands Argonauts. As sanctuary ambassadors, these fourth- to eighth-grade students participated in a number of environmental services throughout the year, including community outreach events, invasive plants removal, beach cleanups and rocky intertidal monitoring. They also developed a poster project with environmental themes of local, national or international relevance, such as global warming, marine debris, urban runoff and establishing marine protected areas. The posters were displayed at the Channel Islands National Park Visitor Center and at Earth Day festivals.

Sanctuary Staff Participates in Local School Science Fairs

In May, staff attended the Isla Vista Science Night and Fair, sponsored by Goleta Union School, a K-6 school with a 68-percent Hispanic student body. Channel Islands Naturalist Corps volunteers provided hands-on demonstrations to over 200 students, families and teachers about the resources of the sanctuary and Channel Islands National Park. Sanctuary staff also attended the Harding School Science Night in May — a K-6 Santa Barbara School with a 95-percent Hispanic student body. The sanctuary’s “Protecting Your Channel Islands” brochure was distributed in Spanish at the event to provide outreach to the students and their families.

Ventura County Fair Exhibit Wins Award for Best Natural Resources Exhibit

Staff from Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, Channel Islands National Park, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and California State Parks designed a “Partners in Preservation” exhibit space at the 132nd Ventura County Fair in August. The booth won first place for the best natural resources and agricultural exhibit. Channel Islands Naturalist Corps volunteers provided coverage at 20 shifts during the 10-day event. Over 300,000 people were estimated in attendance at the fair and several thousand fair-goers visited the sanctuary booth.

To learn more about these and other accomplishments, visit sanctuaries.noaa.gov

